AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS, COMPLETE LISTING OF CLAIMS IN ASCENDING ORDER WITH STATUS INDICATOR

Please amend the following claims as indicated.

1. (Currently Amended) A method for papermaking, said method comprising:

reacting an aqueous solution of sodium silicate with a mineral acid to produce a silica sol with ~~making paper by adding to pulp slurry a silica sol which is prepared through the reaction between an aqueous solution of sodium silicate and a mineral acid, and which has, under~~ a SiO_2 concentration from 15 to 50 g/L ~~wherein the value of the concentration is shown by [C],~~ and a viscosity from (0.12 x [C]) mPa•s to 15 mPa•s measured at 25°C under the SiO_2 concentration wherein [C] denotes a value of the SiO_2 concentration; ~~and~~

adding the silica sol, and a cationic component and/or an amphoteric component to pulp slurry; and

making paper from the pulp slurry containing the silica sol, and the cationic component and/or the amphoteric component.

2. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the silica sol has a pH of 3 or less.

3. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein said silica sol is produced by:

preparing a high concentration silica sol which has a high SiO_2 concentration [C] ranging between 100 g/L and 200 g/L, and has a viscosity from (0.06 x [C]) mPa•s to 30 mPa•s measured at 25°C under the high SiO_2 concentration ~~range~~, and

diluting the high concentration silica sol prior to storage.

4. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 3, wherein the high concentration silica sol has a pH of 1.3 to 3.

5. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein the silica sol is further diluted before adding to the pulp slurry.

6. (Currently Amended) A retention aid comprising a silica sol, ~~which~~ wherein the silica sol is prepared ~~through the reaction between~~ by reacting an aqueous solution of sodium silicate ~~and~~ with a mineral acid, and ~~which has, under~~ the silica sol has a SiO_2 concentration from 15 to 50 g/L ~~wherein the value of the concentration is shown by [C],~~ and a viscosity from (0.12 x [C]) mPa•s to 15 mPa•s measured at 25°C under the SiO_2 concentration, wherein [C] denotes a value of the SiO_2 concentration.

7. (Original) The retention aid as claimed in claim 6, wherein the silica sol has a pH of 3 or less.

8. (New) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the silica sol is prepared in the following three steps:

(1) reacting the aqueous solution of sodium silicate with the mineral acid to obtain a high concentration silica sol precursor, the high concentration silica sol precursor having a high SiO_2 concentration [C] ranging between 100 g/L and 200 g/L;

(2) aging the high concentration silica sol precursor for a predetermined time period to produce a high concentration silica sol with a viscosity from (0.06 x [C]) mPa•s to 30 mPa•s measured at 25°C under the high SiO_2 concentration; and

(3) diluting the high concentration silica sol to produce the silica sol.

9. (New) The method as claimed in claim 8, further comprising storing the silica sol wherein the silica sol is further aged while the silica sol is being stored.

10. (New) The method as claimed in claim 8, wherein the predetermined time period is from 30 minutes to 200 minutes.

11. (New) The method as claimed in claim 9, wherein the predetermined time period is from 30 minutes to 200 minutes.

12. (New) The method as claimed in any one of claims 8-11, wherein the precursor has a pH of 3 or less.